

Burke-Gilman Trail Redevelopment Study Citizens Advisory Group Minutes of November 16, 2004, meeting

In its opening meeting, the Citizens Advisory Group met in the City of Lake Forest Park Council Chambers at Lake Forest Park Town Centre with the following members present: Tim Ahern, Gary Elmer, Tom French, Mark Gibbons, Sandy Koppenol, Michelle LeMoine, Dean Peterson, Jon Skamser, Alison Starling, Stuart Strand, Jeff Weissman, Mark Withers. Unable to attend: Kate Comtois.

Welcoming remarks

Meeting facilitator Jessie Israel of King County thanked the members for coming and introduced for welcoming remarks Lake Forest Park Mayor Dave Hutchinson, King County Councilmember Carolyn Edmonds, and Nori Catabay from the King County Executive's Office. All three generally thanked the members for their service and said that they expect the group's collaboration and input to be invaluable to the redevelopment study.

Meeting overview

Israel handed out binders for the group members that include letters of appreciation from King County Executive Ron Sims and Mayor Hutchinson, contact information for the group members, information on the redevelopment study timeline and process, the group's charter, a King County mailing about the redevelopment from spring 2004, information about study consultant Atelier ps, Burke Gilman Trail information from the King County Web site, a Seattle Times article about the trail from February 2004, and King County's Regional Trail Inventory and Implementation Guidelines.

Israel informed the members they were representative of the 34 applicants for the group, and suggested members represent not only their designated interests but suggested they consider the needs of all interest groups. She encouraged all to subscribe to the Burke-Gilman Trail list-serve by e-mailing listman@metrokc.gov with "subscribe Burke Gilman Trail" in the subject line, and to let others interested in the trail's redevelopment know about this e-mail resource.

Israel introduced Logan Harris of King County as the group's point of contact until Brooke Bascom returns from maternity leave in late January. Harris said the best way to reach him is by e-mail at logan.harris@metrokc.gov.

Citizens Advisory Group introductions

All the group members in attendance introduced themselves and described their interest in serving the advisory group. The group members represent trailside homeowners, cyclists (commuters and recreation), other trail users, business, the community at large, and the LFP Parks and Recreation Commission. They were asked to consider what other groups are not represented. Responses included

such constituencies as children, elderly, pet owners, the disabled, school groups, bird watchers, berry pickers, emergency responders, motorists, etc.

King County's regional trail system, Burke-Gilman Trail background

Tom Koney, Assistant Director, King County Parks, said that Regional Trails is among the core missions identified in King County Parks Business plan adopted by Council in 2002. He said the county has a regional trail system comprised of nearly 200 miles of multi-purpose trails, and that the county's vision is to increase that to a system of more than 300 miles that link cities to cities, and cities to open spaces throughout King County.

Koney encouraged the members to review the Regional Trail Inventory and Implementation Guidelines. He said it is a great resource that provides background on trail acquisitions, planning and development and will serve as the foundation for King County as it moves forward in the redevelopment process.

Kevin Brown, Capital Projects Manager, King County Parks, said the Lake Forest Park section of the Burke-Gilman Trail is one of the first segments in the county's regional trail inventory, and is more than 30 years old. He said about 2 million people a year use the Burke-Gilman and Sammamish Trail alone and that increased use and deteriorating conditions have led to the need for trail upgrades. In identifying these needs, the King County Executive and King County Council approved funding for the redevelopment study that will evaluate proposed improvements along the route.

Brown went over the timeline and process for the redevelopment study, emphasizing that, in addition to CAG review, there will be a number of opportunities for public review and comment. A Draft Concept Plan will be developed into the Spring of 2005. After CAG review and recommendations, and public review and comment, the county will coordinate with Lake Forest Park on a Final Concept Plan in late Spring of 2005. The final plan will present alternatives favored in the draft process, and again, the CAG will review the plan and offer recommendations before a public review and comment opportunity. A Schematic Design will be developed into the Fall of 2005. After more public review and comment and coordination with LFP, Brown said that would lead into final construction recommendations and drawings by Spring of 2006. If all issues are worked out at that point, construction could begin later that year.

Brown said that similar public involvement is not typically necessary for most trail improvements that King County makes. But because this trail section is within a city's limits, and due to sensitive issues surrounding trail use, multiple traffic intersections, safety, and adjacent homeowners, the Lake Forest Park section is a great candidate for a Citizens Advisory Group. King County also established at CAG for the development of the East Lake Sammamish Trail (ELST).

Dean Peterson noted that project has been characterized with conflict and legal issues, and asked about the status of the ELST. Brown said the trail is now open in Redmond and Issaquah, and that the county anticipates the Sammamish section will open next year. Brown said that developing consistent policies is very important and that the East Lake Sammamish Trail helped the county develop its consistent approach.

Brown said King County has hired an experienced consultant, Atelier ps, to walk it through the LFP redevelopment project. He said King County will look at their recommendations, go over them with the CAG and LFP and then take them to the public.

Burke-Gilman Trail Redevelopment Study update

Diane Steen of Atelier ps, said the consultant's scope of work includes bringing the county portion of the Burke-Gilman Trail from NE 145th Street to 55th Ave NE to current trail standards, which she said may include: a separate, soft-surface trail for pedestrians parallel to the hard-surface trail if possible; widening of trail to current standards (or resurface if not feasible); correction of drainage problems; correction of signage problems; correction of pavement problems; replacement of bollards as necessary; updated crossings; and other elements as identified.

Based on the project program, Steen said Alelier's work will identify and document existing trail constraints, opportunities and development issues. It will recommend solutions to address these constraints and development issues. Trail cross sections, based on KC preferred trail sections, will be developed and incorporated with existing site conditions. At each check in point, Atelier's recommendations will be presented to King County and the City of Lake Forest Park. The County and City will then jointly present the recommendations to the Citizens Advisory Group for review and recommendation before presentation to the public for review.

Steen presented a list of issues that need to be addressed in the study, including Environmental Considerations; Stormwater Drainage, Detention and Water Quality; Trail Right of Way; Trail Crossing Plan (Traffic Study), Utilities, Aesthetics and Visual Quality, Vegetation, Trail Safety and User Conflicts, Codes and Permitting, and Site Furnishings.

She said the major part of the work is still to come, but that Atelier has begun an aerial mapping and topographic survey, wetlands and stream reconnaissance, a traffic study and a trail survey. A public meeting took place in the Fall of 2003 at Brookside Elementary School, at which the redevelopment study outline and trail existing conditions were presented and discussed, and public comment was solicited and compiled.

Dean Peterson invited the consultant to come on a site visit to the trail with the homeowners and also referred to a letter from County Councilmember Edmonds

to Atelier. Harris said he would get a copy the letter and distribute it to the CAG members.

Israel encouraged CAG members to send questions through Harris and to avoid contacting the consultant directly. One point of contact will help the county keep the billable hours down and the project within budget.

It was asked if the county could provide Atelier's budget so the taxpayers can take a look. Israel said scope of work and budget information will be provided to the CAG members.

Group information

Israel said CAG meeting minutes would be made available to the group for review before general circulation. Members agreed one week would be enough for review.

Group members agreed the next meeting will be January 25, 7 p.m., at the City of LFP Council Chambers, but that future meetings would take place the third Tuesday of each month.

The group decided to put together a view trip of the trail section beginning at 145th Street on January 8. The group will meet at 10 a.m. at the Great Harvest Bakery at the Town Centre and carpool to the trail. Harris will send out a proposal on the site visit.

Members asked if national plans or standards for this type of redevelopment were available. The county said it can get a copy of those documents, or provide a Web address at which the standards can be reviewed. Israel said an online reference library could be set up for CAG members and the public.

Brown was asked where the money for construction would come from. He said it's not determined yet, but that the county has access to federal and state grant money that would pay for the bulk of construction.

Israel again thanked the members for coming and adjourned the meeting.